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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/649,332	08/26/2003	Kazuo Samejima	0388-031645	4587

28289 7590 12/15/2004

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EXAMINER

TORRES, ALICIA M

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3671

DATE MAILED: 12/15/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/649,332

Applicant(s)

SAMEJIMA ET AL.

Examiner

Alicia M Torres

Art Unit

3671

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 26 August 2003.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-6 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-3 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 4-6 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 3/4/04.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

1. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

2. Claims 1-3 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Samejima et al. '733, hereafter Samejima.

3. A mid-mount mower having a mower unit (4) mounted between a front wheel unit (1) and a pair of right and left rear wheels (2) arranged rearwardly of a vehicle body (3) to be independently shiftable, comprising:

a front frame unit (forward end of frame 9) including a pair of right and left front longitudinal frames (9), a first cross frame (unnumbered, see connecting bar between reference numbers 40a and 40b in Figure 8) interconnecting the front longitudinal frames (9) in forward positions thereof longitudinally of the vehicle body (3), and a second cross frame (unnumbered, two connecting bars shown under box 44 in Figure 8) interconnecting the front longitudinal frames (9) in rearward positions thereof longitudinally of the vehicle body (3), the front frame unit (9) supporting the front wheel unit (1) and also supporting a lift mechanism (6, 7, 8) for vertically movably suspending the mower unit (4);

a rear frame unit (rear end of frame 9) including a pair of right and left rear longitudinal frames (9), the rear frame unit (9) being connected to the front frame unit (9); and

a rear wheel drive unit (24) interconnecting the rear longitudinal frames (9);

Art Unit: 3671

wherein the second cross frame (two bars) has a downwardly opening recess (space between the two bars, see Figure 8) disposed adjacent a middle position thereof, the recess allowing entry thereto of an upwardly protruding portion (29) of the mower unit (4) without interference when the mower unit (4) is raised by the lift mechanism (6, 7, 8), as per claim 1; and

wherein the upwardly protruding portion (29) of the mower unit (4) is a gear case protrusively mounted on a mower deck (28), as per claim 2; and

wherein the upwardly protruding portion (29) of the mower unit (4) is a universal joint (26) connecting an input shaft (unnumbered) of the mower unit (4) to a drive transmission shaft (27), as per claim 3.

Allowable Subject Matter

4. Claims 4-6 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Conclusion

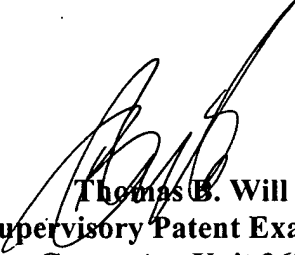
5. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Price, Gummerson, and Oshima et al. have been cited as of interest.

6. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Alicia M. Torres whose telephone number is 703-305-6953. The examiner can normally be reached Monday through Thursday from 7:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Thomas B. Will, can be reached at 703-308-3870.

Art Unit: 3671

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the group receptionist whose telephone number is 703-305-1113. The fax number for this Group is 703-872-9306.



Thomas B. Will
Supervisory Patent Examiner
Group Art Unit 3671

AMT
December 10, 2004